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ABSTRACT

Traditionally the 2-year college has been considered an extension of the secondary school system, drawing the greatest portion of its financial support from state funds designated for public education. Recently, 2-year colleges have changed status and are now identified with higher education making them eligible for federal funding. This study looks at the legislative activity of the 1950's and 60s pertaining to the 2-year college as well as examining this past year's congressional activity. Noteable enactments are the National Defense Education Act of 1958, Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, Vocational Education Act of 1963 and the Higher Education Act of 1965. The projected Higher Education Act of 1971 has the potential of elaborating the role of government as a supportive agent of higher education. Presently, both houses of Congress have passed bills to provide more substantial operating support to 2-year colleges. Although the two bills must be compromised before final approval can be given, what remains important is that legislators have come to realize the significance and dynamics of the 2-year institution. (MN)

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FEDERAL TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION, 1958 - 1971: THE CONGRESS TURNS TO THE JUNIOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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INFORMATION

Federal involvement in high education is, by no means, a new relationship. Although the term 'education' was never specifically mentioned in the Constitution and the responsibility for establishing educational structures and programs is nowhere formally delegated to the federal government, it was within only several years of the Declaration of Independence that the government began passing legislation - under the implied powers doctrine - affecting education. In 1785, the Northwest Ordinance designated portions of land in each township that were to be used explicitly for educational purposes. Two years later, a second ordinance was passed specifying endowments for institutions of higher education,[1] reiterating the importance of education in a democratic society and setting precedent for government action in higher education. From this early start, the federal government embarked on programs and policies that exerted a steadily increasing influence on higher learning.

For most of the nearly two hundred years of federal involvement in higher education, the emphasis has been on providing financial assistance to public four-year institutions. The Morrill Acts

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[1] Robert D. Calkins, "Government Support of Higher Education," in Financing Higher Education: 1960-1970 (New York: McGraw Hill,1959), p. 185

of 1862 and 1890 were early examples of federal programs that provided money and land for the establishment of institutions of higher learning (land grant colleges) and for the advancement of particular programs within these institutions. In the 1900's as educational needs were continuously exposed, the government reacted with sporatic legislative remedies attempting to meet the educational demands of a fast growing and increasingly technological nation. The traditional concept of post-secondary education, being that in which the course study always lead to a bachelors degree, provided the impetus to direct legislative aid to those institutions offering such programs. Historically, bachelor status had been of a philosophical nature, excluding programs of a vocational or sub-intellectual level.[2] It has been only within the last several decades that the federal government has demonstrated its changing attitude towards programs of a nature other than bachelor status by providing direct assistance to those institutions of higher learning offering career post-secondary education - particularily the junior community college.

Further consideration of the pattern of federal funding to institutions offering other than a bachelors degree as its highest academic award, brings attention to the identity problems that seem to be inflicted upon junior community colleges. In the last

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[2] S. Rep. No. 92-346, 92d Cong., 1st Sess. 29 (1971).

fifty years, two-year colleges have begun to play an important role in filling higher educational needs generated by an expanding population and an advancing technology. The difficulty arises when determining the sources of financial assistance. Traditionally, the two-year college was considered an extension of the high school system, drawing the greatest portion of its financial support from state funds designated for public education. It is only recently that the junior community college has somewhat changed its status and come to be generally identified with institutions of higher learning, and therefore eligible for federal funding directed toward these institutions.

It was not until the late 1950's and the 1960's, that widespread financial assistance to higher education became appropriate federal activity. During this period, across-the-board financing brought the federal government to the status of being a significant affector in the field of higher education, particularly in areas of specific government interest where specialized educational outcomes were sought.[3] During the mid 60's and particularily in 1970 and 1971, a noticeable shift or expansion has taken place as federal assistance to higher education has begun to concentrate on, or at least include on a more equitable basis, junior and community colleges.

This, then, will represent the area of concentration in the study: looking at the legislative activity of the 1950's and 1960's pertaining to junior community colleges as a basis for examining this past year's

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[3] J. Kenneth Little, "Federal Programs of Education and Training," in Higher Education and the Federal Government, ed. by Charles G. Dobbins (Wash. D.C.: American Council on Education, 1963), p. 75.

Congressional activity that strives to equalize educational opportunity and democratize higher learning by providing equal access to higher education by means of funding and improving the junior community college system.

Federal Legislation: 1958 - 1965.

It is virtually impossible to examine all legislation affecting junior community colleges during this period and before; for there exists such a large number of direct, indirect, and tangential effects resulting from these legislative enactments that higher educational institutions themselves often have difficulty determining the actual extent of assistance that potentially could be afforded them. For this reason, only the major acts passed during these years (particularily sections of importance to the two-year college) will be considered, attempting to supply sufficient background for examining the proposals that were approved by the House and Senate in 1971.

The National Defense Education Act of 1958, proposed to "strengthen the national defense and encourage and assist in the expansion and improvement of educational programs to meet critical national needs."[4] Passage of the act resulted from the realization that technology in the U.S.S.R. had far surpassed that of the United States and that an across-the-board revamping of the educational system was needed

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[4] National Defense Education Act, 72 Stat. 1580 (1958).

(combining different effects and new emphasis) in order to keep pace with the technological advancements of other nations. The general purposes of the act, affecting higher education, were to: 1) delineate procedures of application for, and the extent of, federal contracts and grants to educational institutions, 2) strengthen graduate and vocational education programs, 3) stimulate student enrollment by means of loans and grants and more effective counseling, and 4) increase the supply of college teachers. The attitude of the times reflected a desire to identify and educate more of the potential talent that existed in the nation and to assure the fact that no student of ability would be denied the opportunity of a college education due to insufficient financial resources. The term junior or community college was nowhere mentioned in the National Defense Education Act, but within the definition of institutions of higher education was a provision including accredited institutions offering two-year programs.[5] Junior community colleges and their students therefore qualify for assistance under the National Defense Education Act through rather indirect means.

The Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, was the first piece of major federal legislation to formally spectify junior and community colleges as recipients of federal financial aid. As stated,

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[5] N.D.E.A., Sec. 103, sub. sec. (b), no. 3.

the purpose of the act was:

> to authorize assistance to public and other non-profit institutions of higher education in financing the construction, rehabilitation, or improvement of needed academic and related facilities in undergraduate and graduate institutions.[6]

Section 103 of Title I, specified grants to public community colleges and technical institutes for construction of facilities to meet expanding enrollments. A specific funding formula was established, based on the number of high school graduates in the state and the state's allotment ratio, which was not to exceed 40% of the eligible developmental costs (set-up on a matching basis). The Higher Education Facilities Act was a milestone in federal legislation relating to the junior community college movement. for approximately 24% of the total money designated to higher education was allotted to junior community colleges. For the first time, two-year colleges were legislatively recognized as entities in the realm of higher education.

The Vocational Education Act of 1963, was passed to improve and strengthen the quality of vocational education in the United States and to extend the applicable provisions of the National Defense Education Act three more years. The stated purpose was:

> to authorize federal grants to States to assist them to maintain, extend, and improve existing programs of vocational education and development new programs of vocational education...so that persons of all ages

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[6] Higher Education Facilities Act, 77 Stat. 363 (1963).

> in all communities of the State...will have ready access to vocational training or retraining which is of a high quality...[7]

Vocational education was defined as technical training given as part of a program designed to fit individuals for gainful employment. Those schools designated to receive assistance under this act included:

> the departments or divisions of a junior or community college or university which provides vocational education in no less than five different occupational fields, under supervision of the State board, leading to immediate employment, but not leading to a baccalaurate degree..[8]

The Higher Education Act of 1965, is the most prominent and comprehensive congressional enactment in the field of higher education - even to this day. The passage exhibited a desire:

> to strengthen the educational resources of our colleges and universities and to provide financial assistance for students in post-secondary and high education.[9]

The act's major titles intended to substantiate higher education in the United States by: expanding community service and continuing education programs, providing special funds for training and research in the field of library science, greatly increasing aid to developing institutions, delegating more funds for student assistance, and establishing special teacher education programs to improve undergraduate instruction. This ommibus act, which gave full credence to

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7 Vocational Education Act, 77 Stat. 403, Part A, Section 1 (1963).

8 Ibid., Part A, Sec. 8, sub. sec. 2(d).

9 Higher Education Act, 79 Stat. 1219.

junior community colleges as institutions of higher learning, and delegated nearly one-quarter of its funding to them, remains not only the most substantial attempt to raise the quality of higher education by the federal government but also the legislative base to which projected proposals will be added and extended.

With these major acts and other legislative correlates, the role of the federal government in supporting higher learning was firmly established. This does not, however, represent the ultimate refining of the government's total role as a supporter to the furthering development of higher education; for with rapidly changing theories, structures and needs, federal involvement must regularily reappraise existing educational conditions and redefine financial empheses.

Proposed Federal Legislation: 1970 - 1971

Just as 1958 represented a high-water-mark in the relationship between the federal government and education in general, this past legislative year has potentially equal significance concerning the relation of the federal government to the two-year institutions of higher education. Congressional testimony concerning colleges and universities seemed to reflect the attitudes that higher education was now facing extraordinary changes (e.g. the greater number of students and the updating and expansion of course structures and modes of instruction), which could be made more difficult if pending financial problems were not substantially alleviated.[10] Once again,

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[10] H.R. Rep. No. 92-554, 92nd Cong., 1st Sess., p.2 (1971).

higher educational needs were exposed to the federal government with hopes of receiving assistance in meeting the educational needs of the nation.

The culmination of numerous proposals affecting higher education (with particular emphasis on the junior community college movement) evolved in the form of two bills, each version coming under consideration in that particular house of Congress from which it originated. These bills, H.R. 7248 and S. 659, are proposals directed toward updating federal involvement in higher learning by renewing and amending existing legislation (N.D.E.A. of 1958, Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, Higher Education Act of 1965 and other related acts) and expanding the federal role where new or greater needs have arisen.

Representative Edith Green (D.-Ore.), Chairman of the Special Subcommittee on Education, sponsored H.R. 7248 (projected to be called Higher Education Act of 1971) in the House, with the intent of statutorily elaborating on the role of the government as general supportive agent of higher education. H.R. 7248 was structured to provide approximately one billion dollars in general operating assistance to higher learning institutions through 1976.[11] Junior community colleges were afforded no specific title explicitly delegating aid programs to that type of institution. Two-year colleges

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[11] Cheryl M. Fields, "There's Still A Long Road to Travel Before Colleges Get U.S. Aid," Chronicle of Higher Education, Nov. 15, 1971, p.1.

are, however, catagorically listed as recipients of federal assistance under several sections of H.R. 7248. Title I, Community Service and Community Education Programs, specifies funds to institutions of higher learning for the purpose of helping to solve community problems by means of community and continuing education. This encouragement towards closer interaction between educational institutions and the community has particular relevance to the junior community college which is, by nature, oriented toward existing within and meeting the needs of the surrounding community. Title XVI, Occupational Education, specifies that:

> higher quality programs of post-secondary occupational education can be found in a wide variety of institutions, including public and private junior and community colleges,...and federal support should encourage the utilization of all such facilities to meet the enormous needs in this field.[12]

Under this provision, funds (100 million for fiscal 1972, 250 million for fiscal 1973, and 500 million for fiscal 1974) were set aside for those institutions desiring to generate that type of program. Under various other titles, provisions were also established for institutes and commissions of higher education, whose purpose it would be to focus on educational research, development and experimentation in the United States (representatives of two-year colleges were included as formal members of these groups.)

The House bill of educational amendments is significant in that

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12 H.R. 7246, Title XVI, Sec. 1062, sub.sec. (d) (1971).

it reaffirms strong federal support of higher learning by amending existing programs and accepting new roles of general support. There exists, however, no stipulation for an all-encompassing program that directly and singularily specifies the junior community college as a recipient of generalized federal assistance.

The Senate's bill (S. 659 - named the Educational Amendments of 1971), combining numerous previously considered proposals, reflects the general attitude of the Senate concerning higher education and the structure of federal dealings in higher learning. As stated, the Senate bill is:

> designed to be an ommibus education bill through which the 92nd Congress will deal legislatively with education programs which expire in the fiscal year of 1971-1972.[13]

The passage of S. 659, or its amended version, would represent the compilation of all existing legislation pertaining to higher education under a single law (the Higher Education Act of 1965) which would extend through 1975. The major emphases of the bill, which apply tangentially to junior community colleges, include: individual student grants of up to $1,400, cost of education grants to institutions for federally aided students, and an emergency grant program for financially weakened institutions.

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13 Higher Education Amendments of 1971, Committee of Labor and Public Welfare, on S. 659, S. Rpt. No. 92-346, 92d Cong., 1st Sess., 6 (1971).

The signifance of S. 659 rests with the fact that it amends the Higher Education Act of 1965, by adding Title X (Improvement of Educational Opportunities Through Community Colleges); which provides for state wide plans for post-secondary educational opportunities through community colleges, authorizes grants for establishing new community colleges and provides for the leasing of facilities to be used in junior community college programs. Federal realization of the need for the expanded support of two-year college education is indicated by the fact that many of the features of Senator Harrison Williams' Comprehensive Community College Act of 1970 were incorporated into this forward-looking section of S. 659. Senatorial attitudes seem to reflect the need for additions to the Higher Education Act of 1965, that provide for state wide planning, start-up and expansion grants to two-year colleges, and a unit within the Office of Education that would coordinate programs administered by that office - affecting community colleges. S. 659, presented by Chairman Pell (D. - R.I.) of the Committee on Welfare and Education, stated as its purpose:

> to encourage and assist the States and localities in establishing and expanding community colleges in communities throughout the States in order that every American will have the opportunity to attend a community college within reasonable commuting distance of his residence.[14]

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14 Higher Education Amendments of 1971, p.5.

A program of grant procedure was spelled out in Title X, which appropriated 50 million dollars for fiscal 1973, 75 million for fiscal 1974, and 150 million dollars for fiscal 1975 for carrying out the purposes of this title. The nature of the establishment grants were elaborated upon as the federal government was:

> authorized to make grants to new community colleges to assist them in planning, developing, establishing and conducting initial operations of new community colleges in areas of States in which there are no existing community colleges or in which existing community colleges cannot adaquately provide post-secondary educational opportunities for all residents thereof who desire and can benefit from post-secondary education.[15]

Extension programs for existing community colleges were also afforded support as financial assistance was provided to help meet changing needs, growing enrollments and the individual interests of the local community.

Senate Bill S. 659, embodies a genuine response to what many legislators felt was minimal federal support of higher educational institutions, particularily the two-year institutions. With the Educational Amendments of 1971 come increasing funds and reform, the most sweeping of which is designed to provide substantial federal assistance to the comprehensive community college.

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15 S. Res. 659, 92d Cong, 1st Sess. Title I, Part B, Sec. 1011.

Projections

Presently, both houses of Congress have passed bills to provide more substantial operating support to junior community colleges. There appears to remain, however, substantial differences in the two versions and it is questionable whether they will be compromised before adjournment. As reported by the Chronicle of Higher Education,[16] the Nixon Administration appears to have given the favorable nod to the provisions of higher education support as stated in S. 659, which specifies a particular program of the two-year college support, but, it is unsure whether the final drafting will ever get to the signature stage. What remains important, however, is that legislators have come to realize the significance and the dynamics that the two-year college is about to achieve. The fact that the junior community college consistantly demonstrates its readiness for the task of extending and expanding educational opportunity, has low to non-existent tuition rates, generates appeal as a result of its proximity to students and its flexibility in admission requirements and offers curriculum variations that grow out of community needs, attributes to its increasing status of governmental recognition and increasing contributions to higher learning.

Although 1971 represented a milestone in the area of federal activity affecting the junior community college, the fact remains

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16 Editorial, Chronicle of Higher Education, Oct. 18, 1971, p.1.

however, that the past has been characterized by disproportionately low allocations of federal funding for the two-year higher educational institutions. In studying these recommendations, Senate sources estimated that in 1971, two-year colleges received less than 6% of the 4.4 billion dollars budgeted to be administered by the Office of Education.[17] The reply of the educator to this phenomenon is a request for greater federal funding as the increasing burden of support becomes too great for state and local governments to bear. The tendencies exhibited by the Educational Amendments of 1971, suggest that the federal government will assume its share of the role in providing support to the higher educational institutions that have the greatest potential for providing equal opportunity higher education - namely the junior community college.

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17 S. Rpt. No. 92-346, p. 68.

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